

What is claimed is:

1. A method for evaluating a viewer watching programming, comprising the steps of:

5 prompting the viewer during a television programming stream to provide an indicated response to an event within an indicated time period;

detecting the indicated response to the event;

measuring a response time of the indicated response to the event; and

evaluating viewer performance based upon the response time.

10 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing an incentive to the viewer based upon the viewer's performance.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the event comprises an occurrence of

15 audio/visual content broadcast to the viewer during the television programming stream.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising time-stamping the indicated response to the event.

20 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising creating a viewer action's log from the indicated response and the response time.

6. The method of claim 4, further comprising comparing the viewer's action log to a known sequence of events.

25 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the television programming stream comprises an advertisement.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the indicated response to the event is provided by
30 the viewer actuating a pushbutton key on a set-top box remote control unit which

transmits an encoded signal when the viewer identifies the occurrence of audio/visual content.

9. The method of claim 6, wherein the set-top box is operable for monitoring
5 viewing habits and actions, collecting information, and receiving encoded television signals.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the incentive comprises at least one of: an award,
a coupon, a discount, and a prize.
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11. The method of claim 1, further comprising transmitting the indicated response and
the response time to a data-center.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluating performance step comprises
15 instant feedback to the viewer.

13. A media delivery device for evaluating a viewer watching programming,
comprising:
a decoder operable for decoding broadcast media programming into the media
20 delivery device, wherein the broadcast media programming comprises an occurrence of
audio/visual cues;

a viewer action's module operable for detecting a viewer's response to the
occurrence of audio/visual cues;

a timed response monitoring module operable for measuring a response time of
25 the viewer's response;

a processor operable for evaluating the viewer's response and the response time
by comparing the viewer's response and the response time against any known sequence
of events.

30 14. The device of claim 13, further comprising:

a network connection operable for transmitting encoded signals between the media delivery device and an external network;

wherein the media delivery device receives prompts from the external network, and the external network receives notification for the viewer's response and the response time.

15. The device of claim 13, wherein an incentive is provided to the viewer based upon the viewer's response and the response time.

16. The device of claim 13, wherein the network programming comprises an advertisement.

17. The device of claim 13, wherein the viewer's response to the occurrence of audio/visual cues is provided by the viewer actuating a pushbutton key on a set-top box remote control unit which transmits an encoded signal when the viewer identifies the occurrence of audio/visual cues.

18. The device of claim 17, wherein the set-top box is operable for monitoring viewing habits and actions, collecting information, and receiving encoded television signals.

19. A method for providing an incentive to a television viewer, comprising the steps of:

inserting an occurrence of an audio/visual cue into a television broadcasting stream;

receiving an indicated response from the television viewer to the occurrence of the audio/visual cue;

time-stamping the indicated response;

comparing the time-stamped indicated response to a known sequence of events;

rewarding viewer behavior based upon the comparison of the time-stamped indicated response to the known sequence of events.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the reward comprises an incentive, a discount, a coupon, and a prize.

For reference only